THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) The cases of theft/loss of stamps reported by the State Treasuries to ISP are recorded in the books of ISP. As per these records, there were instances of short and excess supply of stamps of face value of Rs. 1453.75 Crores and Rs. 687.89 Crores respectively.

Nationalised banks branches in rural areas

1836. SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of new branches opened by the Nationalised Banks in the rural areas during the last two years;

(b) whether it is a fact that bank branches have not been opened in several rural areas of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar as per their demand; and

(c) if so, by when bank branches are likely to be opened in said villages?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has reported that 19 and 34 new rural branches were opened by the nationalized banks during the years 2003-04 and 2004-05, respectively.

(b) and (c) RBI has further reported that as per its present branch licensing policy, it is left to the discretion of the banks to assess the need for opening bank branches in any area of the country after taking into consideration certain factors such as business potential, viability, infrastructure, security etc. RBI encourages Banks to open more branches in rural areas and gives priority to such requests. Accordingly, four rural branches, two each in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar were opened during the year 2003-2004 and 2004-2005.

Increase in external debt

837. SHRI S. ANBALAGAN. Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India's external debt is rising continuously;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details for the last three years and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps being taken/proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) India's external debt has increased during the last three years in US dollar terms. However, as a percentage of GDP, India's external debt has declined during this period. The details are given in the following Table.

Table: India's external debt (US $ billion)

	At end-Mi arch			Variation during the year		
	2003	2004	2005	2003	2004	2005
1. Multilateral	30.00	29.29	31.76	-1.90	-0.71	2.47
2. Bilateral	16.80	17.28	17.22	1.48	0.48	-0.06
3. IMF	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Trade credit	4.97	4.68	4.96	-0.40	-0.29	0.28
5. Commercial Borrowings	22.54	22.10	26.95	-0.79	-0.44	4.85
6. NRl deposits (Long-term)	23.16	31.21	32.60	6.01	8.05	1.39
7. Rupee debt	2.82	2.72	2.30	-0.21	-0.10	-0.42
8. Total Long-term (1 to 7)	1S0.2&	107.28	115.79	4.19	0 99	8.51
9. Short-term	4.67	4.43	7.52	1.92	-0.24	3.09
10. Grant Total (8*9)	104.96	111.71	123.31	6.11	6.76	11.60
External debt as % of GDP	20.3	17.8	17.4			

The major components of India's external debt that registered increase during the last three years were NRl deposits, commercial borrowings and short-term debt. Rise in NRl deposits was mainly on account of flow-back, into the repatriable schemes of deposits matured under discontinued Non-

Resident (Non-Repatriable) Rupee Deposit scheme (which was not a part of external debt) with effect from April 1, 2002. Increase in "commercial borrowings reflected larger access to international capital market by Indian Corporates. The surge in short-term debt was on account of increase in trade credits because of larger import demand.

(c) Government follows a prudent external debt management policy to keep external debt within manageable limits. The policy focus is on concessional loans, longer maturity profiles, close monitoring of short-term debt and laying emphasis on non-debt creating capital flows.

Defaulters of bank loans

838. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Maharashtra, Delhi and Tamil Nadu are the top three defaulters of bank loans of about one crore as per the list compiled by All India Banks Employees Association;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Tamil Nadu atone constitutes Rs. 10,755 crores as bad loans which is 11 per cent of the total all India level; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to recover the loans from the defaulters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) The Government has not received any communication from the AII India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA) in this regard. As per information reported by banks/FIs to the Credit Information Bureau (India) Limited, Maharashtra (Rs. 37279 crore), Delhi (Rs. 13225 crore) and Tamil Nadu (Rs. 10655 crore) top the lists of defaulters of Rs. one crore and above (suit-filed and non-suit-filed), as on 31st March, 2004.

(c) Government of India and Reserve Bank of India have stipulated certain steps for recovery of loans, which, *inter-alia,* include evolving and implementing a recovery policy by banks, filing of suits in civil courts/ DRTs, issue of notices under SARFAESI Act, 2002, compromise settlement and monitoring and follow up of NPAs at various levels. The Credit Information Companies (Regulation) Act, 2005 has been enacted to provide for regulation of credit information companies and to facilitate efficient distribution of credit thereby arresting fresh accretion of NPAs. Credit Information Bureau (India) Ltd. has also been set up to disseminate information on borrowers to the Banks.